(b) and (c) Two Uranium deposits have been located at Lambapur-Yellapur in Nalagonda District and Tummalapalle in - Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh. Reserves of about 1700 tonnes of Uranium Oxide have been established and existence of an additional 2300 tonnes is inferred in Lambapur-Yellapur, where the average grade is 0.07% U_3O_8. about 15000 tonnes of grade 0.05% U_3O_8 reserves have been established in Tummalapalle region. Estimated value of these deposits would be known after the detailed evaluation.

(d) Government have not yet taken a decision on the utilisation of these deposits.

Upliftment of Weaker Sections

802. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to provide some benefits to the socially backward and economically weaker sections to help support themselves; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) The target group for various programmes of Rural Development, Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation consists of socially backward and economically weaker sections, and other poor people, Besides, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) also aims at benefiting destitute households. It has three components viz, NDAPS (National Old Age Pension Scheme), NFBS (National Family Benefit Scheme) and NMBS (National Maternity Benefit Scheme).

Science Congress

803. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Will the MINISTER OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Science Congress held recently in the country;

(b) the suggestions offered by the participants to the Union Government; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) 84th Annual Session of the Indian Science Congress was held at the University of Delhi from 3rd to 8th January, 1997 and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister. The focal theme of this Session was:

"Frontiers in Science and Engineering and their Relevance to National Development".

According to the information made available by the Indian Science Congress Association, about four thousand scientists took part in the Session. A number of plenaries on current interests in Science and Technology were held and were addressed by eminent scientists. In addition, a large number of special lectures and symposia were organised to discuss various developments in the frontier areas in Science and Technology. Special Sessions for school children, women in science and young scientists were also held.

(b) The suggestions made at the Congress include the need to set up an Apex Advisory Committee on Science and Technology; increase in budgetary support to science education; encouragement to industry to invest in R & D; conversion of high ash coal into a source of cleaner energy etc.

(c) Government are appreciative of the suggestions made.

[Translation]

Unauthorised Occupants

804. DR. BALIRAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether before 1984, Post and Telegraph Department's colony had 235 quarters at G.Point Gol Dakkhana, New Delhi;

(b) whether the quarters for the staff of the President House were constructed on half of the land of above colony after 1984 and now its staff are residing in these quarters;

(c) whether New Delhi Municipal Council constructed a school building on a plot of this land and the remaining land from quarter No.16 to 157 was taken over by the Ministry;

(d) whether due to negligence of the ministry unauthorised occupants have been residing in the rest of these quarters since 1985; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to vacate these quarters and punish the negligent officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Power Generation Policy

805. SHRI JAGAT VEER SINGH DRONA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has alleged that the absence of transparency in the Power generation policy for private sector and poor financial condition of the State Electricity Boards are the main hindrances for the private investment in this infrastructure sector: and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) The World Bank has, in one of its reports, listed several impediments to private investment in the Indian Power Sector like poor financial health of the State Electricity Boards, lack of competitive bidding in the initial stages etc.

Competitive Bidding has been made mandatory with effect from 18.2.1995 for award of power projects in the private sector. Recognising the need of a sound financial health of the State Electricity Boards (SEBs) as essential for private investment, the time bound reforms and restructuring of SEBs is high on the agenda of the Government as reflected in the Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power.

[English]

Rakesh Mohan Committee

806. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any action plan has been recommended by the Rakesh Mohan Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made in setting up of an Independent Power Regulatory Commission and the response and action initiated by the State Governments in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure the proper implementation of the Common Minimum National Action Plan in power sector by the State Governments and the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) Rakesh Mohan Committee has submitted The India Infrastructure Report - Policy imperatives for growth and welfare to the Government of India on 22.6.1996. This report has recommended policy reforms which can help in greater commercialisation of infrastructure like urban development, power, telecommunications, roads, industrial parks and ports through increase in the domestic savings rate, gearing up of the capital markets, setting up of a regulatory framework and Infrastructure Finance Development Corporation (IFDC), Public Private Partnerships (PPP) etc..

(c) and (d) As a result of the Chief Ministers' Conference on 16th October and 3rd December, 1996, a Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power has been formulated which, inter-alia, lays down the setting up of a Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and State Electricity Regulatory Commissions. This Action Plan has been circulated to all the State Governments for Initiating action on the same. Orissa has already set up the State Electricity Regulatory Commission and the States of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have initiated action in this regard.

House Building Advance

807. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to revise the rules pertaining to House Building Advance being given to the Central Government employees;

(b) whether the Central Government employees are allowed to take second loan from the office on payment of the first loan;

(c) the other facilities proposed to be extended to the Government employees for building houses of their own;

(d) whether Government propose to reduce the rate of interest; and

(e) if so, the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Srisailam Left Bank Canal Power Project

808. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has scraped the Srisailam Left Bank Canal Power Project;

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the project was taken up with loan assistance of 26,101 million Yen from the overseas Economic Co-operation Fund, Japan;

(d) the actual estimated cost of the project and expenditure incurred thereon so far; and

(e) the reasons for delay in completing the project within the stipulated schedule?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (e) The Srisailam Left Bank Power House (6x150 MW) in Andhra Pradesh is being executed by Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board with Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, Japan of 48,668 million Yen. The latest estimated cost of the project is Rs.2324.55 crores (1996 price level), out of which an expenditure of Rs.1123.63 crores has been incurred on the project upto December, 1996.

The project was originally scheduled for completion by December, 1994 but has been delayed due to heavy